

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
TRSE-00 AID-05 HA-05 IO-13 ACDA-12 /100 W
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R 200648Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1703

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 7928

FOL CABLE SENT ACTION PRIORITY NEW DELHI INFO DACCA FROM
CALCUTTA MAY 18 REPEATED TO YOU

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L CALCUTTA 0826

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, BG
SUBJECT: INQUIRY BY BANGLADESH REP IN CALCUTTA ABOUT POSSIBLE
SOVIET EFFORTS TO INFLUENCE JUNE 3 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
IN BANGALDESH

1. AT HIS REQUEST BANGLADESH DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER
ATIQUEZZAMAN KHAN CALLED ON APO THIS MORNING. HE HAS
RECENTLY RETURNED FROM A VACATION IN BANGLADESH, MUCH OF
WHICH HE SPENT TRAVELING THROUGH THE COUNTRY, HE SAID,
AND DURING WHICH HE HAD OCCASION TO SEE PRESIDENT ZIA.
KHAN BEGAN BY ASKING ABOUT OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE UPCOMING
ELECTION IN BANGLADESH, AND PARTICULARLY WHETHER THE
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY

STYLE OF GOVERNMENT WAS A MATTER OF SIGNIFICANCE TO US.
APO REPLIED IN GENERALITIES, INDICATING THAT OUR EMBASSY
IN DACCA WOULD BE APPROPRIATE SOURCE OF SUCH INFORMATION.

2. KHAN THEN CAME TO WHAT APPEARED TO BE THE REAL REASON
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FOR HIS CALL. HIS GOVERNMENT HAS INFORMATION, HE SAYS,
THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS CONDUCTING ACTIVITIES IN BANGLADESH
TO INFLUENCE THE JUNE 3 ELECTION'S OUTCOME. DID
WE HAVE ANY INFORMATION, HE ASKED, WHICH WOULD
PERMIT THIS BELIEF TO BE SUBSTANTIATED, OR WHICH
WOULD PROVIDE DETAILS OF THE SOVIET ACTIVITY?
ALTHOUGH HE REITERATED SEVERAL TIMES HIS INTEREST IN

ESTABLISHING "THE EXTENT OF SOVIET ACTIVITY",
WHY HE WAS RAISING THIS QUESTION WITH US AND WHETHER
OR NOT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD ASKED HIM TO DO SO, WAS
NOT CLEAR.

3. KHAN SAID THAT AN INDO-SOVIET AXIS EAGER TO
INFLUENCE EVENTS IN BANGLADESH WAS BEING DISCUSSED
OPENLY IN HIS COUNTRY'S PRESS. MONEY FOR THE
ELECTION WAS BEING "PUMPED OUT" FROM THE INDIAN
EMBASSY IN DACCA. SOME OF IT, OR PERHAPS THE PLANNING
BEHIND THE EFFORT, MIGHT BE FROM THE SOVIETS.

4. AN IMPLICATIONS OF MR. KHAN'S LINE OF CONVERSATION
WAS THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD TAKE A SIMILAR
INTEREST IN THE BANGLADESH ELECTION, BUT ON THE SIDE
OF PRESIDENT ZIA. HE INQUIRED ABOUT A POSSIBLE VISIT
OF SECRETARY VANCE TO DACCA, WHICH HE UNDERSTOOD HAD
BEEN PLANNED SOME TIME AGO, BUT THEN DROPPED.

5. MR. KHAN ASKED OUR OPINION OF THE SOVIETS COUP
IN AFGHANISTAN, INDICATING HE BELIEVED IT HAD BEEN
ENGINEERED BY THE RUSSIANS. HE ALSO ASKED OUR REACTION
TO THE REFUGEE MOVEMENT FROM ARAKAN IN BURMA, AND
FROM DANDAKARANYA IN INDIA. HE FELT THAT
SOMEBODY COULD WELL HAVE MASTER-MINDED BOTH THESE
MOVEMENTS, WHOSE TIMING WAS SUSPECT, AND WHICH HE
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IMPLIED WERE POTENTIALLY DESTABILIZING IN BANGLADESH.
IN THE CASE OF THE DANDAKARANYA REFUGEES IN WEST
BENGAL, HE SAID A FEW, BUT ONLY A VERY FEW-PERHAPS
25 PERSONS-HAD GONE ACROSS THE BORDER. THE
BANGLADESHIS ARE NOW PATROLLING THE INDO-BANGLADESH
BORDER IN THE SUNDERBANS AREA, HE SAID.

6. KHAN INDICATED NO PARTICULAR CONCERN ABOUT A
RECURRENCE OF THE PROBLEMS HIS GOVERNMENT HAD FACED
IN OCTOBER 1977, THAT IS TO SAY, INSTABILITY AMONG
THE MILITARY. LYDON UNQUOTE
GOHEEN

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Draft Date: 20 may 1978
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition History: n/a
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